

Proposal Title	European Protection Now! A proposal to improve reception and inclusion of asylum seekers in Europe in response to the Italian refugee crisis of 2014
Reserve Fund	European Reserve Fund
Collaborating Programs	The International Migration Initiative, OSIFE, OSEPI and the Justice Initiative
Approver	Jordi Vaquer
Date Approved	5 August 2014
Amount Requested	USD600,000
Unforeseen Need (250 words)	<p>A direct response to George Soros' concern regarding the crisis, this proposal addresses a specific situation in time building on pre-existing work and expanding an existing commitment in front of an acute crisis. The situation is unforeseen because of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improved sealing of the Turkish-Greek land border, poor treatment of transit asylum seekers in Greece and Bulgaria and effective control of the strait of Gibraltar, combined with good weather in the central Mediterranean and instability in Libya, have divested and accelerated transit flows towards Italy, which have grown exponentially, putting strain on an overstretched system. 2) The Lampedusa tragedy of October 2013 changed public opinion in Italy and Europe, and has created a more favorable context for a change in policy. 3) The Renzi government has shown willingness to address the issue and may be pushed to act further, in particular in the context of the EU Presidency and its need to secure funding for the continued rescue operations. <p>There is an opportunity to alleviate the human suffering through direct service delivery while creating the conditions for policy change through advocacy and campaigning. The big surge in arrivals creates difficulties on the ground, both in border areas and in transit cities. OSF can push for meaningful and lasting policy change at EU and Italian level, and for that a strong operation in Italy could be useful. The window of opportunity may close as the emergency recedes and the memories of the Lampedusa catastrophe fades from memory and media.</p>
Activities Proposed (500 words)	<p>HUMANITARIAN GRANT-GIVING</p> <p><u>People transiting</u></p>

Grantee Medu, Doctors for Human Rights, can strengthen their assistance work to those who are in makeshift shelters, recuperating from the sea crossing exhaustion, and getting organised to flee to northern countries. Medu with its mobile health facilities and familiarity with the landscape can offer immediate health assistance. Medu are experienced in providing humanitarian assistance, monitoring the human rights situation and collecting data.

Sicily and the South

The collapse of asylum system capacities due to arrivals and the uneven distribution throughout Sicily bears immediate attention. Some refugees are hosted in organised shelters; others abandoned in substandard settings. Rape, abduction and extortions are common on many migration routes. Asylum seekers may receive decent assistance, but important services beyond basic survival are missing. For example, psychological support to help victims of serious violence. We will identify specific facilities to support.

Legal support

Italian asylum legislation is patchy, hence a need for a more coherent framework. We support legal initiatives for asylum seekers and refugees, including strategic litigation, monitoring and legal support. Our strong partners active in this field, including the lawyers' network ASGI, are developing a proposal for implementation.

We will provide a number of asylum seekers with high quality legal support which, when coupled with communications and advocacy activities, will give a serious blow to a system which acts in breach of the law. Ensuring access to an enhanced asylum system will strengthen Italy advocacy activities at EU level.

Enhancing the integration

The quality of Italian asylum services is patchy. One accomplishment is the cessation of developing large institutions for asylum seekers (aka CARA) and the reinforcement of widespread smaller units (aka SPRAR), where asylum seekers and refugees are relocated throughout the country. To enhance integration, we will:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify a few example of excellence in refugees' integration and support the advanced integration tools used or will be used. ➤ Highlight examples of pitfalls existing in the system to continue putting pressure on authorities. <p>COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectifying the terms of the debate by mainstreaming correct data and information, often overshadowed by emotional and populists calls. We propose to review/publicize: numbers, costs and processes in Italy and Europe; the humanitarian situation, its causes; costs of the mismanagement and its inadequacy; problems caused by the lack of solidarity among Italian regions. • Filling the gap: developing additional research/analysis_ about areas of major concern, including documentation on the effective support provided or denied to asylum seekers/refugees in Italy vis-à-vis other European countries, and research on mismanagement of relief funds, or on best practices in refugees' integration. • Visibility to the operation: inciting the public to support rescue and enhancement of the asylum system by focusing on good practices linking the present phenomenon with Italian history of emigration, and highlighting the intrinsic value of reception and integrations. • Targeted advocacy to OSF can shape the details of the reforms including through: direct meetings with decision makers; workshops between experts and Italian civil servants/officials, highlighting international best practices, coordination between the Italian and EU level.
<p>Statement of who within OSF would lead the work</p>	<p>The very essence of the project, since its inception, is based on complementing pre-existing and parallel work, and on combining existing litigation, advocacy and grant-making with new activities that all lead towards a shared objective. In that respect, the use of multiple tools is guaranteed.</p> <p>Active in Italy since 2009, OSF has a network of grantees, former grantees and contacts, whose capacities have been established based on direct experience. With the network support, OSF can move rapidly and effectively.</p> <p>Costanza Hermanin and Miriam Anati of OSIFE have led the work in Italy for almost 5 years: they know the context and the players from close. Additionally, Costanza is part of the</p>

	<p>advocacy efforts and totally connected to OSEPI, IMI and OSJI. They are knowledgeable, but they will need additional support from consultants, which has been budgeted and included in the request.</p>
<p>Contributions expected from various units within OSF and essential partners or grantees (250 words)</p>	<p>A joint effort will be undertaken with OSF colleagues globally, to gain more financial support. Internationally, Mr Soros as well as OSF colleagues could approach potential co-donors. In Italy we are approaching possible partners.</p> <p>Many organizations and donors are active and the idea is to partner with some Italian donors, local authorities, government and NGOs. OSF will by no means be the only, or even the sole player on the ground, but what is unique in OSF's approach is the connection of this work to the policy and advocacy work conducted by the International Migration Initiative and OSEPI, in which GS is very involved personally; with the creation of a civil liberties coalition in the country; and with important strategic litigation that the Justice Initiative has been supporting for some time.</p>